

HOW SAFE ARE OUR ROADS?

Annual data report on the impact of drunk driving on road safety in the metropolitan Washington region in 2021

November 2022



HOW SAFE ARE OUR ROADS? ANNUAL DATA REPORT ON THE IMPACT OF DRUNK DRIVING ON ROAD SAFETY IN THE METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON REGION IN 2021

Prepared for the Washington Regional Alcohol Program by the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments.

November 16, 2022

ABOUT WRAP

The Washington Regional Alcohol Program (WRAP) is a coalition of diverse interests using effective education, innovative programs, and targeted advocacy to end alcohol-impaired driving and underage drinking in the Washington, D.C. metro area. Through public education, innovative health education programs and advocacy, WRAP is credited with keeping the metro-Washington area's alcohol-related traffic deaths historically lower than the national average. WRAP, however, may best be known to area residents via the organization's popular free safe ride service to prevent drunk driving, SoberRide®.

ABOUT COG

The Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) is an independent, nonprofit association that brings area leaders together to address major regional issues in the District of Columbia, suburban Maryland, and Northern Virginia. COG's membership is comprised of 300 elected officials from 24 local governments, the Maryland and Virginia state legislatures, and U.S. Congress.

CREDITS

Cover photo caption: "Given the rise in alcohol-related crashes, it's more important than ever that we continue our efforts to emphasize and practice safe driving habits to protect motorists traveling on Virginia's roadways" said Virginia Governor Glenn Youngkin at the September 1, 2022, launch of the Commonwealth's "Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over" (campaign. (Photo courtesy of the Virginia "Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over" campaign, supported by a grant from the Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles to WRAP.)

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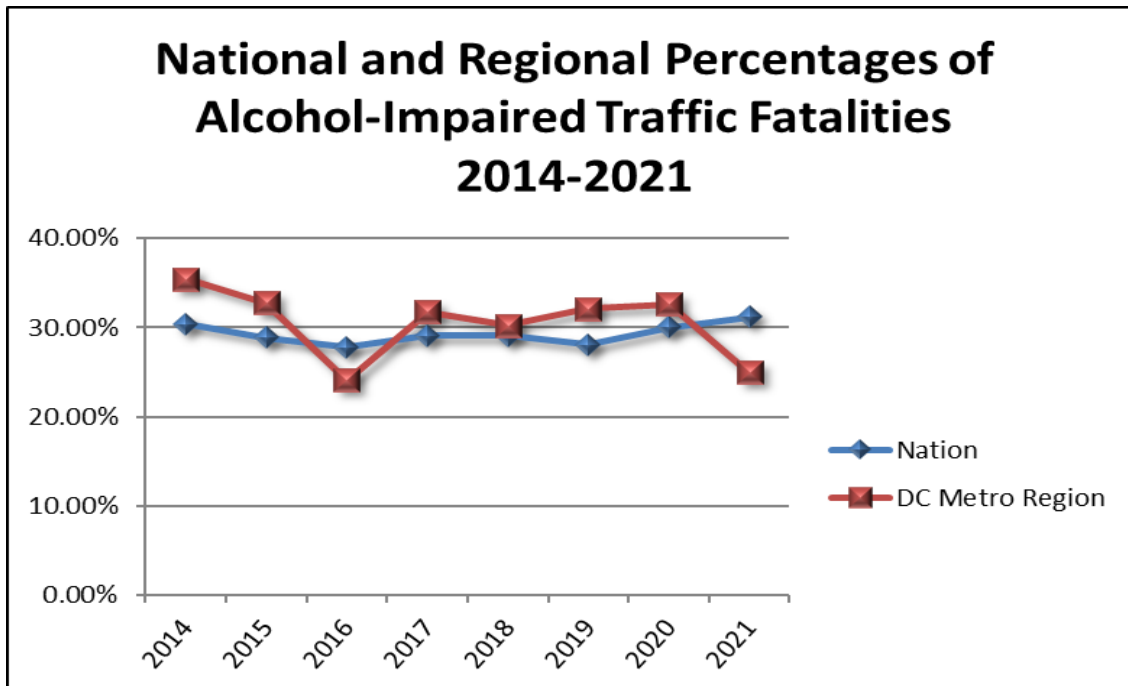
A LOOK AT REGIONAL AND NATIONAL FIGURES

The metropolitan Washington region has experienced a decrease in alcohol and/or drug-impaired fatalities and an increase in alcohol and/or drug-impaired crashes, arrests, and injuries in 2021.

Regional alcohol and/or drug-impaired traffic fatalities have decreased 10 percent of total crash fatalities in the region in 2021 from 2020¹, compared to an increase of 5.56 percent in 2020 from 2019. Nationally, alcohol-impaired fatality rates increased in 2021 to 31% of total crash fatalities (compared to 30% in 2020²).

Jurisdictions differ in collection and categorization methods for alcohol-impaired driving, therefore, some of the data in this report may include both alcohol and alcohol/drug-impaired driving numbers. These regional totals include U.S. Park Police data.

Figure 1. National & Regional Percentages of Alcohol-Impaired Traffic Fatalities, 2014-2021



¹ Alcohol-impaired traffic fatalities for Montgomery County and Prince George's County were corrected from the 2021 report. Montgomery County alcohol-impaired traffic fatalities increased to 16 in 2020 (previously reported as 10); Prince George's County increased to 38 (previously reported as 21).

² For additional information, see [NHTSA Overview of Motor Vehicle Crashes in 2021](#).

Figure 2. Regional Totals of Alcohol-Related Injuries, Crashes, & Arrests, 2014-2021

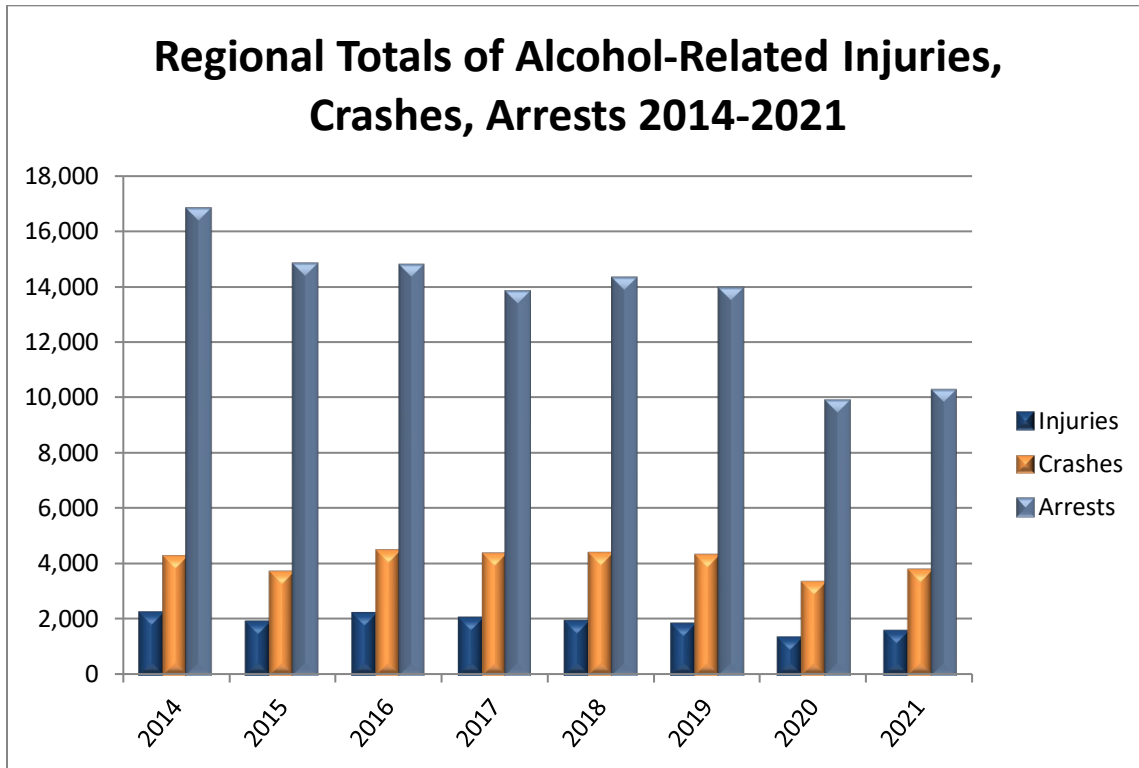


Figure 3. Regional Alcohol-Impaired Fatalities, 2014-2021



HOW SAFE ARE OUR ROADS? 2022 REPORT

OVERVIEW

Findings in the 2022 report (2021 data) include:

FATALITIES: Regional (DC Metro region and National Parks) alcohol and/or drug-impaired traffic fatalities **decreased** by 10 percent between 2020 and 2021 (from 95 to 85 such fatalities).

- The total average number of regional alcohol and/or drug-impaired traffic fatalities over the last five years (2017-2021) is 88.
- Three of the last five years has had less alcohol and/or drug-impaired traffic fatalities than the average.
- Of the metropolitan Washington region's 341 total traffic fatalities for 2021, 85 (or 24.9%) were due to drivers who were alcohol and/or drug-impaired (Blood Alcohol Concentration [BAC] = .08+).

INJURIES: Regional alcohol and/or drug-related traffic injuries **increased** 17.26 percent between 2020 and 2021 (from 1,298 to 1,522 such injuries).

- The average number of regional alcohol and/or drug-impaired related traffic injuries over the last five years (2017-2021) is 1,689.
- Three of the last five years has had less alcohol and/or drug-impaired traffic injuries than the average.

CRASHES: Regional traffic crashes attributed to alcohol and/or drugs **increased** 13.58 percent between 2020 and 2021 (from 3,292 to 3,739 such crashes).

- The average number of regional alcohol and/or drug-impaired related traffic crashes over the last five years (2017-2021) is 3,990.
- Two of the last five years has had less alcohol and/or drug-impaired traffic crashes than the average.

ARRESTS: Regional arrests for either driving under the influence (DUI) or driving while impaired (DWI) **increased** 3.7 percent between 2020 and 2021 (from 9,882 to 10,248 such arrests).

- The average number of DC Metro regional alcohol and/or drug-impaired related arrests over the last five years (2017-2021) is 12,430.
- Two of the last five years has had less alcohol and/or drug-impaired traffic arrests than the average.

Background

Data compiled in this report comes from national, state, and local sources including the U.S. Census Bureau, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), U.S. Park Police, Metropolitan Police Department, District of Columbia Department of Transportation, Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles, Maryland National Study Center for Trauma and Emergency Medical Systems, and local police departments of each jurisdiction.

Jurisdictional data in this report does not always include State Police data. The State Police in Maryland and Virginia are charged with enforcing traffic laws on state highways and interstate expressways; inclusion of this data would likely increase the number of incidents in all categories. It is possible that some jurisdictional data may include State Police figures because local police often respond to highway incidents when State Police are unavailable. In some jurisdictions, the data reported was provided by the state, and most likely include state police data.

SUB-REGIONAL TRENDS

Figure 4. Alcohol-Related Change Per Year: Northern Virginia

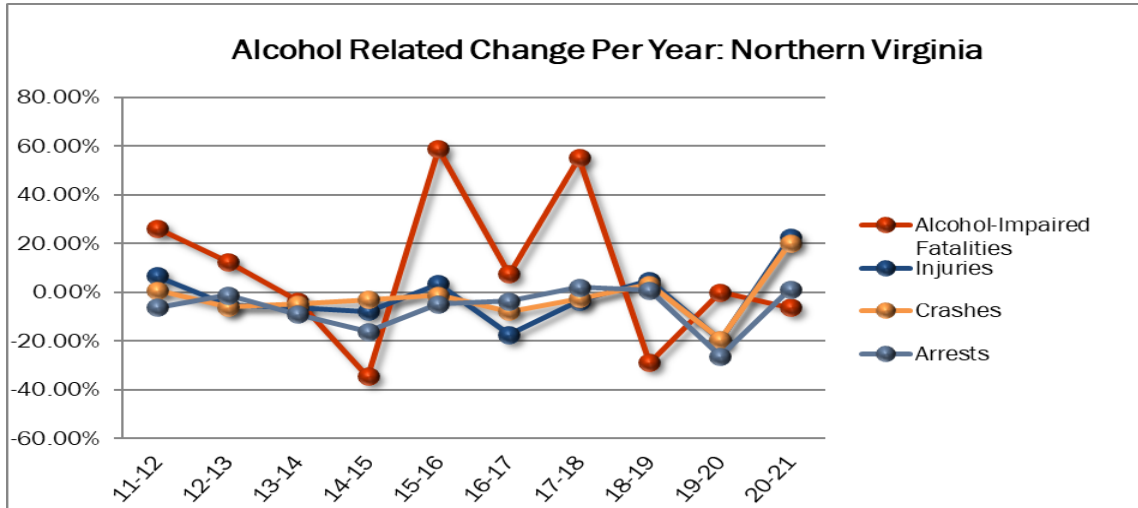


Figure 5. Alcohol-Related Change Per Year: Suburban Maryland

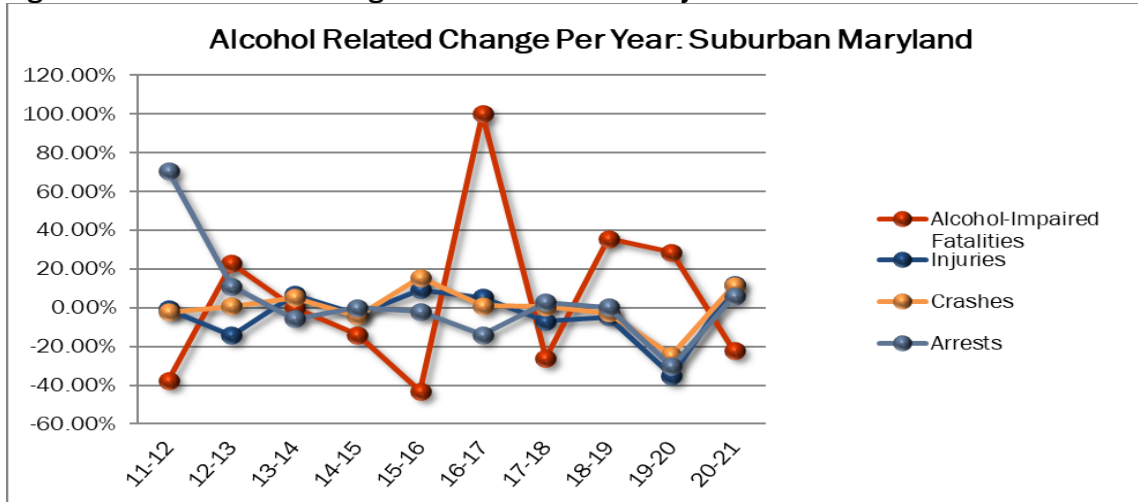
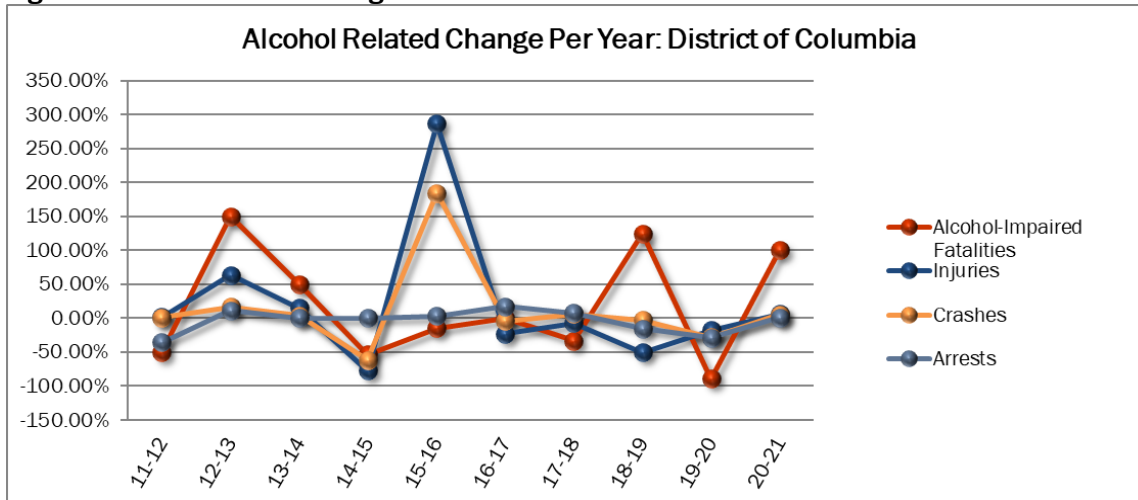


Figure 6. Alcohol-Related Change Per Year: District of Columbia



TOTAL TRAFFIC FATALITIES

Total Traffic Fatalities by Jurisdiction, 2014-2021									
Year	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Percent Change 2020-2021
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA									
Washington	26	26	28	33	36	27	37	40	8.11%
MARYLAND									
Montgomery County	40	47	42	33	34	37	46	43	-6.52%
Prince George's County	98	95	78	99	103	112	110	129	17.27%
MD Regional Total	138	142	120	132	137	149	156	172	10.26%
VIRGINIA									
Arlington County	5	5	1	5	2	6	4	4	0.00%
Fairfax County	32	30	36	35	47	45	37	50	35.14%
Loudoun County	12	11	12	22	11	13	12	8	-33.33%
Prince William County	23	11	30	22	24	14	18	32	77.78%
City of Alexandria	0	4	4	4	5	5	7	7	0.00%
City of Fairfax	0	0	4	0	2	2	1	1	0.00%
City of Falls Church	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00%
City of Manassas	0	0	0	2	4	1	1	1	0.00%
City of Manassas Park	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	N/A ³
Northern Virginia Total	73	61	87	90	95	86	80	104	30.00%
DC Metro Regional Total	237	229	235	255	268	262	273	316	15.75%
National Parks in Region	N/A	17	10	16	13	18	18	25	38.89%
Regional Total Adjusted	N/A	246	245	271	281	280	291	341	17.18%
National	32,744	35,484	37,806	37,473	36,835	36,355	38,824	42,939	10.60%

³ A percent cannot be calculated due to the original value being zero.

ALCOHOL-IMPAIRED TRAFFIC FATALITIES

Alcohol-Impaired Traffic Fatalities by Jurisdiction with BAC=.08+, 2014-2021									
Year	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Percent Change 2020-2021
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA									
Washington	15	7	6	6	4	9	1	2	100.00%
MARYLAND⁴									
Montgomery County	11	10	4	8	7	10	16	8	-50.00%
Prince George's County	32	27	17	34	24	32	38	34	-10.53%
MD Regional Total	43	37	21	42	31	42	54	42	-22.22%
VIRGINIA									
Arlington County	2	2	0	2	1	2	1	0	-100.00%
Fairfax County	12	9	12	12	18	17	18	17	-5.56%
Loudoun County	6	2	4	7	7	5	7	2	-71.43%
Prince William County	5	2	9	6	14	6	3	10	233.33%
City of Alexandria	0	2	1	1	3	2	2	1	-50.00%
City of Fairfax	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0.00%
City of Falls Church	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00%
City of Manassas	0	0	0	1	2	0	1	0	-100.00%
City of Manassas Park	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00%
Northern Virginia Total	26	17	27	29	45	32	32	30	-6.25%
DC Metro Regional Total	84	61	54	77	80	83	87	74	-14.94%
National Parks in Region	4	14	5	9	5	7	8	11	14.29%
Regional Total Adjusted	88	75	59	86	85	90	95	85	-10.53%
National	9,967	10,320	10,497	10,908	10,710	10,196	11,718 ⁵	13,384	14.22%

⁴ Maryland updated alcohol-related fatalities as previously reported in the 2021 HSAOR? Report for Montgomery County from 10 to 16 and Prince George's County from 21 to 38.

⁵ NHTSA updated alcohol-related fatalities as previously reported in the 2021 HSAOR? Report for national data from 11,654 to 11,718.

TOTAL TRAFFIC INJURIES

Total Traffic Injuries by Jurisdiction, 2014-2021									
Year	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Percent Change 2020-2021
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA									
Washington	7,474	8,638	3,878	3,612	3,437	2,403	2,027	2,635	30.00%
MARYLAND									
Montgomery County	6,196	6,365	7,045	7,000	6,753	6,453	4,252	4,696	10.44%
Prince George's County	6,549	6,746	7,715	7,787	7,351	7,285	5,168	5,803	12.29%
MD Regional Total	12,745	13,111	14,760	14,787	14,104	13,738	9,420	10,499	11.45%
VIRGINIA									
Arlington County	1,094	978	1,048	1,036	998	1,125	590	734	24.41%
Fairfax County	7,649	7,677	7,564	6,418	6,000	6,032	3,733	4,613	23.57%
Loudoun County	2,123	2,143	2,289	2,081	2,299	2,079	1,317	1,523	15.64%
Prince William County	2,915	2,747	2,785	2,652	2,811	2,899	1,889	2,771	46.69%
City of Alexandria	757	731	721	576	699	673	420	466	10.95%
City of Fairfax	440	338	294	242	147	164	92	103	11.96%
City of Falls Church	241	160	133	177	154	150	92	147	59.78%
City of Manassas	646	626	773	711	756	541	480	462	-3.75%
City of Manassas Park	29	48	60	26	63	36	31	54	74.19%
Northern Virginia Total	15,894	15,448	15,667	13,919	13,927	13,699	8,644	10,873	25.79%
DC Metro Region Total	36,113	37,197	34,305	32,318	31,468	29,840	20,091	24,007	19.49%
National Parks in Region	N/A	603	532	492	496	496	195	437	124.10%
Regional Total Adjusted	N/A	37,800	34,837	32,810	31,964	30,336	20,286	24,444	20.50%

ALCOHOL-RELATED TRAFFIC INJURIES

Alcohol-Related Traffic Injuries by Jurisdiction with BAC=.01+, 2014-2021									
Year	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Percent Change 2020-2021
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA									
Washington	263	59	228	176	163	81	67	71	5.97%
MARYLAND									
Montgomery County	343	366	401	492	423	357	263	245	-6.84%
Prince George's County	501	451	492	448	451	476	277	358	29.24%
MD Regional Total	844	817	893	940	874	833	540	603	11.67%
VIRGINIA									
Arlington County	78	84	91	94	79	89	53	71	33.96%
Fairfax County	476	442	459	331	290	329	270	329	21.85%
Loudoun County	150	128	144	117	133	124	107	97	-9.35%
Prince William County	204	182	182	163	181	187	147	226	53.74%
City of Alexandria	60	52	53	53	48	44	35	34	-2.86%
City of Fairfax	26	25	12	17	7	6	8	8	0.00%
City of Falls Church	4	10	11	11	7	10	8	10	25.00%
City of Manassas	47	41	38	33	35	33	27	36	33.33%
City of Manassas Park	5	2	9	5	13	9	11	4	-63.64%
Northern Virginia Total	1,050	966	999	824	793	831	666	815	22.37%
DC Metro Region Total	2,157	1,842	2,120	1,940	1,830	1,745	1,273	1,489	16.97%
National Parks in Region	N/A	N/A	33	46	33	32	25	33	32.00%
Regional Total Adjusted	N/A	N/A	2,153	1,986	1,863	1,777	1,298	1,522	17.26%

TOTAL TRAFFIC CRASHES

Total Traffic Crashes by Jurisdiction, 2014-2021									
Year	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Percent Change 2020-2021
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA									
Washington	21,752	2,400	25,850	25,712	25,818	26,823	18,311	21,617	18.05%
MARYLAND									
Montgomery County	12,279	13,006	14,160	14,239	14,231	13,843	9,728	11,183	14.96%
Prince George's County	13,355	14,758	17,185	18,297	19,562	20,516	17,134	19,952	16.45%
MD Regional Total	25,634	27,764	31,345	32,536	33,793	34,359	26,862	31,135	15.91%
VIRGINIA									
Arlington County	2,469	2,483	2,711	2,508	2,535	2,558	1,516	1,773	16.95%
Fairfax County	13,680	14,024	13,781	13,631	13,368	13,301	8,735	9,958	14.00%
Loudoun County	4,281	4,824	4,921	4,875	5,149	4,951	3,421	4,051	18.42%
Prince William County	5,856	5,660	5,564	5,540	5,757	5,880	4,416	5,668	28.35%
City of Alexandria	1,777	1,912	1,736	1,441	1,566	1,499	957	1,096	14.52%
City of Fairfax	700	561	565	596	417	528	325	440	35.38%
City of Falls Church	165	169	144	121	130	121	80	87	8.75%
City of Manassas	568	595	633	573	607	438	412	318	-22.82%
City of Manassas Park	71	81	97	55	71	80	64	93	45.31%
Northern Virginia Total	29,567	30,309	30,152	29,340	29,600	29,356	19,926	23,484	17.86%
DC Metro Region Total	76,953	60,473	87,347	87,588	89,211	90,538	65,099	76,236	17.11%
National Parks in Region	4,164	4,621	4,049	3,486	1,600	1,462	1,018	2,639	159.23%
Regional Total Adjusted	81,117	65,094	91,396	91,074	90,811	92,000	66,117	78,875	19.30%

ALCOHOL-RELATED TRAFFIC CRASHES

Total Alcohol-Related Traffic Crashes by Jurisdiction with a BAC=.01+, 2014-2021									
Year	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Percent Change 2020-2021
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA									
Washington	682	260	740	710	756	735	529	557	5.29%
MARYLAND									
Montgomery County	807	815	905	954	881	827	651	710	9.06%
Prince George's County	1,017	933	1,116	1,085	1,166	1,163	850	963	13.29%
MD Regional Total	1,824	1,748	2,021	2,039	2,047	1,990	1,501	1,673	11.46%
VIRGINIA									
Arlington County	235	218	199	203	162	192	121	172	42.15%
Fairfax County	740	708	701	621	580	589	496	545	9.88%
Loudoun County	236	222	259	227	251	244	181	220	21.55%
Prince William County	319	332	305	296	333	343	284	400	40.85%
City of Alexandria	99	99	94	83	88	87	68	69	1.47%
City of Fairfax	35	29	19	26	10	15	16	21	31.25%
City of Falls Church	9	8	12	10	4	8	8	7	-12.50%
City of Manassas	35	40	30	33	35	27	31	21	-32.26%
City of Manassas Park	3	4	19	9	6	10	14	9	-35.71%
Northern Virginia Total	1,711	1,660	1,638	1,508	1,469	1,515	1,219	1,464	20.10%
DC Metro Region Total	4,217	3,668	4,399	4,257	4,272	4,240	3,249	3,694	13.70%
National Parks in Region	N/A	N/A	33	54	63	33	43	45	4.65%
Regional Total Adjusted	N/A	N/A	4,432	4,311	4,335	4,273	3,292	3,739	13.58%

ALCOHOL-RELATED TRAFFIC ARRESTS

Total Alcohol-Related Traffic Arrests by Jurisdiction, 2014-2021									
Year	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Percent Change 2020-2021
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA									
Washington	1,501	1,508	1,561	1,834	1,978	1,680	1,202	1,213	0.92%
MARYLAND									
Montgomery County	3,723	3,973	4,101	3,406	3,442	3,253	1,960	1,978	0.92%
Prince George's County	3,153	2,894	2,629	2,379	2,506	2,715	2,193	2,425	10.58%
MD Regional Total	6,876	6,867	6,730	5,785	5,948	5,968	4,153	4,403	6.02%
VIRGINIA									
Arlington County	874	742	692	494	445	438	382	470	23.04%
Fairfax County	3,116	2,387	2,457	2,536	2,424	2,400	1,669	1,653	-0.96%
Loudoun County	733	667	671	561	709	731	435	424	-2.53%
Prince William County	2,372	1,941	1,651	1,613	1,890	1,904	1,535	1,486	-3.19%
City of Alexandria	372	349	324	397	292	263	178	230	29.21%
City of Fairfax	107	78	62	59	51	77	33	44	33.33%
City of Falls Church	103	78	55	43	36	57	62	30	-51.61%
City of Manassas	N/A	138	124	125	91	117	101	121	19.80%
City of Manassas Park	N/A	46	71	56	58	51	52	45	-13.46%
Northern Virginia Total	7,677	6,426	6,107	5,884	5,996	6,038	4,447	4,503	1.26%
DC Metro Region Total	16,054	14,801	14,398	13,503	13,922	13,686	9,802	10,119	3.23%
National Parks in Region	740	N/A	359	305	371	234	80	129	61.25%
Regional Total Adjusted	16,794	N/A	14,757	13,808	14,293	13,920	9,882	10,248	3.70%

YOUTH DATA

Alcohol-Related Crashes, Injuries, and Arrests for Persons Under 21 Years of Age by Jurisdiction, 2021												
	Fatalities	Alcohol-Related Fatalities	% of Alcohol-Related Fatalities	Crashes	Alcohol-Related Crashes	% of Alcohol-Related Crashes	Injuries	Alcohol-Related Injuries	% of Alcohol-Related Injuries	Arrests	Alcohol-Related Arrests	% of Alcohol-Related Arrests
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA												
Washington	4	0	0.00%	2,269	16	0.71%	304	3	0.99%	278	23	8.27%
MARYLAND												
Montgomery County	3	1	33.33%	2,423	94	3.88%	733	31	4.23%	2,738	65	2.37%
Prince George's County	8	0	0.00%	4,135	137	3.31%	988	48	4.86%	3,950	56	1.42%
MD Regional Total	11	1	9.09%	6,558	231	3.52%	1,721	79	4.59%	6,688	121	1.81%
VIRGINIA												
Arlington County	1	0	0.00%	210	8	3.81%	62	11	17.74%	1,174	13	1.11%
Fairfax County	3	0	0.00%	1,815	51	2.81%	543	21	3.87%	5,503	75	1.36%
Loudoun County	0	0	0.00%	890	27	3.03%	246	12	4.88%	2,707	25	0.92%
Prince William County	7	1	14.29%	1,277	51	3.99%	457	32	7.00%	5,564	81	1.46%
City of Alexandria	0	0	0.00%	135	7	5.19%	52	5	9.62%	687	7	1.02%
City of Fairfax	0	0	0.00%	96	3	3.13%	8	1	12.50%	213	2	0.94%
City of Falls Church	0	0	0.00%	21	0	0.00%	22	0	0.00%	38	1	2.63%
City of Manassas	0	0	0.00%	83	4	4.82%	77	5	6.49%	629	11	1.75%
City of Manassas Park	0	0	0.00%	18	1	5.56%	5	0	0.00%	283	3	1.06%
Northern Virginia Total	11	1	9.09%	4,545	152	3.34%	1,472	87	5.91%	16,798	218	1.30%
DC Metro Regional Total	26	2	7.69%	13,372	399	2.98%	3,497	169	4.83%	23,764	362	1.52%
National Parks in Region	1	0	0.00%	5	0	0.00%	10	1	10.00%	5	1	20.00%
Regional Total Adjusted	27	2	7.41%	13,377	399	2.98%	3,507	170	4.85%	23,769	363	1.53%

METHODOLOGY

Agencies Providing Local Jurisdictional Data

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

- Metropolitan Police Department
- District Department of Transportation

MARYLAND

- National Study Center for Trauma and Emergency Medical Systems (NSC) at the University of Maryland
- Montgomery County Police Department
- Prince George's County Police Department

VIRGINIA

- Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles
- Arlington County Police Department
- Fairfax County Police Department
- Loudoun County Sheriff's Office
- Prince William County Police Department
- City of Alexandria Police Department
- City of Fairfax Police Department
- City of Falls Church Police Department
- City of Manassas Police Department
- City of Manassas Park Police Department

FEDERAL

- U.S. Park Police

Definitions of Data-Related Terms

NHTSA Alcohol-Impaired Driving Traffic Fatalities: Any fatality that occurs in motor vehicle traffic crash that involves at least one driver or a motorcycle rider (operator) with a BAC of .08 grams per deciliter or higher; This threshold does not consider the impairment status of non-occupants involved in fatal crashes, such as pedestrians or pedal cyclist.

WRAP Alcohol-Impaired Driving Traffic Fatalities: Any person who dies as result of a traffic crash involving alcohol with a BAC level .08 or higher.

WRAP Alcohol-Related Traffic Fatalities for Persons Under 21: Any person under the age of 21 who has died as result of an alcohol-related traffic crash involving a driver with a BAC level .01 or higher. This includes drivers, passengers, bicyclists, and pedestrians.

Alcohol-Related Traffic Injuries: Where any driver, passenger, bicyclist or pedestrian is listed on the police report to be injured in an alcohol-related crash where the BAC = .01 or higher.

Alcohol-Related Traffic Injuries for Persons Under 21: Any person under the age of 21 who receives injuries because of an alcohol-related crash where the BAC = .01 or higher; this includes drivers, passengers, bicyclists, and pedestrians.

Alcohol-Related Traffic Crashes: The driver, passenger, bicyclist, or pedestrian is listed on the police report as drinking before the crash with a BAC = .01 or higher. At least one driver in the crash was reported to be under the influence of alcohol and/or other drugs.

Alcohol-Related Traffic Crashes for Persons Under 21: Any person under the age of 21 who was involved in a traffic crash involving a driver with a BAC = .01 or higher. This data includes drivers, passengers, bicyclists, and pedestrians.

Drunk Driving Arrests/Citation: A general reference to those criminal cases prior to and/or after adjudication and sentencing that are called DUI, DWI, OUI, OWI or other acronyms that generally describe three types of cases:

The driver is sufficiently impaired by alcohol, drugs or a combination of the two, and cannot drive safely, and has a BAC level of .01 or higher.

The driver is a “Drunk Driver”, as defined by the driver being above that state’s legal limit of BAC .08. A driver under the age of 21 is under the influence of alcohol at a BAC level of .02 or higher.

DWI/DUI Arrests: A driver is listed on the police report as arrested for operating a motor vehicle under the influence of alcohol with a BAC level of .01 or higher.

DWI/DUI Arrests for persons under 21: Any person/driver under the age of 21 listed on the police report as arrested for operating a motor vehicle under the influence of alcohol with a BAC level of .01 or higher.

Data Analysis

The findings in this report are based on data collected from organizations and agencies from across the metropolitan Washington region. Data tables provide totals within the metropolitan Washington region as well as individual jurisdictions. Analysis focuses on changes in motor vehicle fatalities, injuries, crashes, and arrests. Results are reported as numbers and percentage of alcohol-related incidents to total numbers across time.

Data Limitations

It is important to note limitations that affected collection and analysis of this data, as they may limit comparability across jurisdictions and influence the level of reasonable analysis. Whenever possible, limitations are noted within the tables and figures.

It should be noted that the researchers constructing this report utilized data from the NSC at the University of Maryland, for data pertaining to crashes, injuries, and arrests. Regarding the alcohol-related crash and injury data, the variable identifies a driver or pedestrian under the influence of alcohol, drugs, both, or none. Within the NSC data reported, researchers analyzed drivers reported as under the influence of *alcohol or both*, to capture alcohol-related crashes and injuries. That variable is created using several others on the report (such as driver condition, BAC, etc.) so it does not specify only those with BAC 0.01+, and comparisons to previous year's data should be made with caution. In addition, because this report tracks just two jurisdictions in Maryland, regional totals could also be affected.

Additionally, there is no standardization for data definitions, collection, or recording within the metropolitan Washington region. Each agency has its own system of data collection, coding, and management. In addition, the range and type of data collected may not be consistent across jurisdictions. The data reported and analyzed in this report reflect data as reported by contact agencies. Independent verification of data to ensure accuracy is not within the scope of this report.

Information on data collection and management systems and changes within jurisdictions was not solicited. In addition, changes in laws or judicial priorities may result in increased attention to specific data (e.g., blood alcohol level in driver fatalities related to stricter server laws). In some cases, this may result in missing data or data that appears inconsistent when examined against the same values for previous years. It is beyond the scope of this report to identify data methodology or priority changes for each jurisdiction.

Data on alcohol-related driver involvement in motor vehicle fatalities, injuries, crashes, and arrests was requested for alcohol-related (BAC= .01+) only, however, due to differences between jurisdictions in reporting on impaired data, some cases may involve drug use.

The number of incidents, total and related to alcohol impairment, is very small for some jurisdictions. Due to the small numbers, jurisdictional analysis might easily misrepresent the problem. For example, an increase of one alcohol-related fatality would have little impact in a jurisdiction that saw 50 alcohol-related fatalities the previous year but would appear to represent a significant change in a small jurisdiction with only one or two alcohol-related fatalities the previous year.

Data are reported and analyzed by absolute numbers only. At this time, information that would allow identification of comparable rates is unavailable. It is assumed that people involved in motor vehicle

crashes and arrests may live within or outside the metropolitan Washington region. Collection of data on driver or passenger residence versus jurisdiction of crash is beyond the scope of this report. Calculating rates based on the metropolitan Washington region's population or number of licensed drivers would not accurately represent the problem since drivers may be from outside the jurisdiction.

Data on people under the age of 21 years is collected in an inconsistent manner among jurisdictions. Caution must be used in evaluation of this data due to varied definitions and missing data.

Each chart displays two regional total numbers. The first, "DC Regional Total" is the total of the District of Columbia, the Maryland region, and the Northern Virginia region. The second regional number, "Regional Total Adjusted," includes data from the U.S. Park Police. Because the U.S. Park Police information has only been recently collected, it is shown separately, and the two regional totals are shown so that comparisons with previous years can be done.

Credits

The How Safe Are Our Roads? Report was prepared for the Washington Regional Alcohol Program (WRAP) by the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG). COG works with WRAP and other partners to compile the data and develop the report.